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ACTION AF-00

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DOTE-00 DS-00 EB-00 EUR-00 FAAE-00 FBIE-00 VC-00  
TEDE-00 INR-00 VCE-00 NSAE-00 DSCC-00 DRL-02 NFAT-00  
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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8439  
INFO NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
OAU COLLECTIVE  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 001030

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JENDAYI FRAZER

LONDON FOR CHARLES GURNEY

PARIS FOR BISA WILLIAMS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/15/11

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SUBJECT: ZIMBABWE FOREIGN MINISTER BRIEFS DIPLOMATIC  
CORPS ON AFRICAN UNION, SADC, AND LAND REFORM

REFS: A) HARARE 1019, B) HARARE 1016  
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CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D'AFFAIRES EARL M. IRVING FOR  
REASONS: 1.5 (B) AND (D).

1. (C) SUMMARY: ON MARCH 14, ZIMBABWE FOREIGN MINISTER STANISLAUS MUDENGE BRIEFED ZIMBABWE'S DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND THE PRESS ON THE FUTURE OF THE PROPOSED AFRICAN UNION, CHANGES MADE TO SADC STRUCTURES IN WINDHOEK ON MARCH 9, AND THE STATUS OF LAND REFORM IN ZIMBABWE. MUDENGE ALSO TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE ANOTHER JAB AT THE UK. THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S STATEMENTS ON THE DRC WERE REPORTED IN REF A. END SUMMARY.

AFRICAN UNION CLOSER TO FRUITION  
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2. (C) MUDENGE BRIEFED HEADS OF MISSION ON THE EARLY MARCH OAU EXTRAORDINARY SUMMIT HELD IN SIRTE, LIBYA. MUCH OF THE SUMMIT WAS FOCUSED ON THE CREATION OF AN AFRICAN UNION, WHICH WILL BE ALONG THE LINES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, THE MINISTER REPORTED. NEW STRUCTURES, INCLUDING AN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, A PAN-AFRICAN PARLIAMENT, A HIGH COURT, AN AFRICAN CENTRAL BANK, AND A VARIETY OF TECHNICAL COMMITTEES, WERE ALL AGREED UPON. ALL 53 COUNTRIES ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT HAVE SIGNED THE ACT THAT CONSTITUTES THE UNION; 32 HAVE FORMALLY RATIFIED THE ACT, AND ONLY FOUR MORE ARE NEEDED TO MAKE THE UNION A REALITY, MUDENGE SAID. (NOTE: LIBYAN AMBASSADOR MAHMOUD YOUSEF AZZABI LATER INTERJECTED TO SAY THAT TWO MORE COUNTRIES HAD JUST RATIFIED THE ACT, BRINGING THE TOTAL TO 34. END NOTE.)  
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3. (C) THE UNION IS EXPECTED TO BE OPERATIONAL BY NEXT YEAR, MUDENGE CONTINUED. THE UNION'S HEADQUARTERS WILL BE IN ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA, BUT ITS OTHER INSTITUTIONS, SUCH AS THE PARLIAMENT AND CENTRAL BANK, WILL LIKELY BE HEADQUARTERED IN YET-TO-BE-DETERMINED CITIES. THE OAU STRUCTURES WILL EVENTUALLY BE FOLDED INTO THE AFRICAN UNION. MUDENGE NOTED THAT ZIMBABWE AND SOUTH AFRICA HAVE ALREADY RATIFIED THE AFRICAN UNION ACT, AND ASSURED THE DIPLOMATS PRESENT THAT THERE IS A "VIGOROUS COMMITMENT BY AFRICA TO GO FORWARD" WITH THE UNION.

RESULTS OF SADC SUMMIT DOWNPLAYED  
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4. (C) THE FOREIGN MINISTER TRIED TO DOWNPLAY THE RESULTS OF THE SADC SUMMIT HELD IN WINDHOEK ON MARCH 9. HE STATED THAT THE SUMMIT WAS FOCUSED ON "MODERNIZING" SADC'S INSTITUTIONS, AS THE DECENTRALIZATION OF SOME ORGANS HAD BECOME A PROBLEM. MUDENGE CLAIMED THE PRESS WAS "CONFUSED" ABOUT THE DECISION MADE TO BRING THE ORGAN ON POLITICS, DEFENSE AND SECURITY INTO THE FORMAL

SADC FRAMEWORK UNDER THE SADC CHAIRMAN. THE MINISTER ASSERTED THAT THE DECISION TO ROTATE THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE ORGAN WAS NOT NEW--THE CHAIRMANSHIP WAS SUPPOSED TO BE ROTATED FROM THE ORGAN'S INCEPTION IN 1996, BUT THE MEMBER STATES HAD SIMPLY DECIDED TO RENEW PRESIDENT MUGABE'S MANDATE YEAR AFTER YEAR. ZIMBABWE "KNEW" THIS COULD NOT GO ON INDEFINITELY. HOWEVER, MUDENGE EMPHASIZED THAT MUGABE WAS NOT VOTED OUT OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP AT THE SUMMIT AS SOME PRESS ARTICLES

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STATED. ALL THE HEADS OF STATE UNANIMOUSLY DECIDED TO PUT OFF ELECTING A NEW CHAIRMAN UNTIL THE SIGNING OF THE NEW SADC CHARTER IN AUGUST. ALL THE MEMBER STATES WERE VERY HAPPY WITH THIS DECISION, THE FOREIGN MINISTER CLAIMED.

LAND REFORM IS PROCEEDING

15. (C) MUDENGE WENT ON TO SAY THAT PRESIDENT MUGABE HAD ASKED HIM TO RESPOND TO THE UNDP'S LETTER URGING THE GOZ TO BREAK THE IMPASSE ON LAND REFORM (REF B). MUDENGE SAID HE COULD NOT DIVULGE THE DETAILS OF THE GOZ'S RESPONSE, AS THEY WERE INTENDED FOR UNDP ADMINISTRATOR MARK MALLOCH-BROWN. THE GOZ WILL FOLLOW THE LAWS OF ZIMBABWE WHEN IT PURSUES ITS LAND REFORM PROGRAM, THE MINISTER CONTENDED. "WE DO NOT REGARD THE ACTIVITIES OF THE WAR VETERANS AS LEGAL, BUT ONLY AS A DEMONSTRATION OF THEIR FRUSTRATION," HE SAID. ZIMBABWE WANTS TO AVOID THE ENORMOUS BLOODSHED THAT WOULD OCCUR IF IT TRIED TO EXPEL THE WAR VETS FROM THE OCCUPIED FARMS. OUR FAST-TRACK LAND REFORM PROGRAM WILL "SHORTEN THE PERIOD OF

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AMBIGUITY," MUDENGE CLAIMED. THE GOZ HAS RESETTLED  
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60,000 PEOPLE ON TWO MILLION HECTARES ALREADY. "GO SEE FOR YOURSELVES WHAT THE PEOPLE HAVE DONE WITH FEW INPUTS," HE CHALLENGED. MUDENGE REMARKED THAT THEIR CROPS "LOOK WONDERFUL," BUT ADMITTED THAT THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE PEOPLE ARE NOT GOOD.

ANOTHER JAB AT THE BRITISH

16. (C) THE FOREIGN MINISTER COULD NOT PASS UP AN OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE ANOTHER JAB AT THE BRITISH, WHOSE HIGH COMMISSIONER WAS IN ATTENDANCE AT THE BRIEFING. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM THE SPANISH AMBASSADOR, MUDENGE ACCUSED THE UK OF TRYING TO SCUTTLE THE EU'S EFFORTS TO HELP ZIMBABWE OUT OF ITS TROUBLES. "HOW CAN THEY CRITICIZE BELGIUM AND FRANCE FOR RECEIVING PRESIDENT MUGABE?" HE ASKED. A PALL FELL OVER THE ROOM AS MUDENGE CALLED THE BRITISH "RACISTS" IN FRONT OF THE ENTIRE DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND SAID THEIR ATTITUDE WOULD EXACERBATE RACIAL DIVISIONS IN ZIMBABWE. MUDENGE'S RANT WAS THE SUBJECT OF THE HEADLINE STORY IN THE MARCH 15 EDITION OF THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED "THE HERALD."

COMMENT

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17. (C) MUDENGE'S ENTHUSIASTIC ENDORSEMENT OF THE LIBYA-SPONSORED SUMMIT ON THE AFRICAN UNION SUGGESTS SOME KIND OF QUID PRO QUO MAY BE AT WORK BETWEEN ZIMBABWE AND LIBYA. ALTHOUGH MANY IN THE GOZ UNDOUBTEDLY AGREE THAT THE IDEA OF AN AFRICAN UNION HAS SOME APPEALING

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ELEMENTS, PRESIDENT MUGABE HAS BEEN TO LIBYA NUMEROUS TIMES BEFORE TO SEEK RELIEF FOR HIS COUNTRY'S CHRONIC FOREIGN EXCHANGE AND FUEL SHORTAGES. MUDENGE'S EFFORT TO DOWNPLAY PRESIDENT MUGABE'S EFFECTIVE OUSTER FROM SADC'S SECURITY ORGAN WAS AS TRANSPARENT AS IT WAS EXPECTED. GOVERNMENT SPINMEISTERS HAVE WORKED HARD TO PORTRAY SADC'S MOVE AS A REGULAR ROTATION OF THE SECURITY ORGAN'S CHAIRMANSHIP, NOT AS A VOTE OF NO-CONFIDENCE IN MUGABE'S HANDLING OF ZIMBABWE'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CRISES. THERE WAS NOTHING NEW IN THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S REMARKS ON LAND REFORM. ANY FEELINGS OF GOODWILL HE MAY HAVE RESURRECTED IN BRINGING TOGETHER THE RESIDENT MISSION HEADS WERE SWEEPED AWAY BY HIS UNDIPLOMATIC DIATRIBE AGAINST THE BRITISH. MUDENGE'S UNEVEN DIPLOMACY IS CHARACTERISTIC OF GOZ ACTIONS IN GENERAL: ONE STEP FORWARD FOLLOWED BY TWO STEPS BACK.  
END COMMENT.

IRVING

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